FALSE VISION

BY

BERNARD L. GARDINER

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False Vision

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The Blind Brotherhood
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PREAMBLE OF THE

BLIND BROTHERHOOD OF MARYLAND, INC.

The Blind Brotherhood of Maryland, Inc. organized October 27, 1927 and incorporated under the laws of the State of Maryland, August 30, 1928, and dedicated to the promotion of fraternal, commercial and legislative, industrial and social advancement of the blind, welcome only those to its ranks who possess and practice the virtue and activities essential to promote and maintain civil and human rights.

The essential duties of this organization, known as the Blind Brotherhood of Maryland, Inc., shall be to educate and to create a true public opinion of the general working and living conditions of the blind, and to promote whatever legislative, commercial, industrial or social program that will best meet their requirements. Further to awaken its members to their responsibility to their moral and civil duties.

By: Bernard L. Gardiner, President

August 2, 1935

Adopted by the Brotherhood

August 2, 1935

FALSE VISION

The achievement of mankind and their contribution to society, are by virtue of the natural order of things attributed to man's intelligence, and the ability of that intelligence to accept adversity and persevere in the shadow of positive failure. It matters not whether his achievements be in the business or professional field. Anything contributed to man's accomplishments must take root in and grow out of the human mind. Although these be accepted as verified facts, we find the efforts of man to master the offerings of the human mind exposed to undue weakness and false vision, and in many cases subjected to permanent abandonment. Is not this condition for the most part credible to man's inability to recognize his true vision? (Mind over matter).

Can it not be said in fairness to one's intelligence, that persons with their good eye sight lay too much emphasis on the value of the physical eye and in doing so, discredit the value of its master organ? (The human mind.) This fact is best borne out by the unusual attitude taken by sighted persons toward those who are unfortunate enough to have lost their sight. It is quite evident that the average person in most every walk of life fails to accept a blind person in any other light than that of a total loss to society. So true is this, that every person who is unfortunate enough to lose their

eye sight find themselves forced into a position where they are made to realize that they are dismembered from society, and most everything that has been near and dear to him while being guided along the path of life by the physical eye.

The climax of one's life is usually reached when he is made to realize that his ambition to make further contribution to the human family has been written into a finished chapter.

Being a blind person myself and in a position to know and to associate with hundreds of them, I am thoroughly convinced that blindness as accepted by society does not exist, except in the lives of the insane or those foolish enough to accept and to twist a flimsy theory into a state of mind. This could easily prove more destructive than any other affliction in which man may be visited.

A house wife may draw the shade across the window of her cottage and in doing so, obstruct the view from the outside, this does not mean that those things that have been obstructed fail to exist, or does the conception of them fail to live in her mind. This in short, is what we have learned to know as blindness, just the drawing of a shade across the window in which mind's eye glances out at the visible world. All that one has to do to master the handicap created by the loss of sight is to reorganize his faculties, reverse his approach to things in general and unite the mind with his remaining instincts; this task well engineered, one may even be able to see through the pores of his flesh. After all what good is one's sight when objects taken in by it

fail recognition or the consent of the mind. Supposing a person would be instantly visited by complete destruction of the mind, this would not in any way affect the physical eye, which would immediately fail to function without the consent of the mind. This unfortunate person would in the truest sense become blind.

If my conception of what constitutes blindness is true, one may reasonably ask the question, Why is it that so many persons become absolute invalids when visited by the loss of sight? For the most part this can be contributed to his surroundings, and the attitude taken toward him on the part of those who are in constant contact with him, who out of pity, or false sympathy, teach the cruel doctrine of intimidation, sympathy and charity to such an extent as to destroy self-reliance. However, it may be truthfully said, that the greatest responsibility for this condition may be found in the individual and his inability, or lack of knowledge sufficient to understand his physical make up. The truest answer to this problem lies in the inability of the human race in general to realize his physical make up as created by his creator. If man would take the same interest in studying the qualities of his physical make up as he does in things mechanical, he would be better prepared to meet and overcome human fraility.

It is false to believe that God Almighty created man with less thought and skill than exercised by man in his construction of things. If an engineer designs a sky scrapper or a bridge, he so arranges the pillows or braces in such a way as to take care of any defects that might show up in the construction. Therefore, who is

it that would be unwise enough to say that man's creator was any less thoughtful in the creation of man. It is my belief that the all wise God never shaped any man's destiny in such a way as to expose him to lasting affliction.

All that one has to do to overcome a handicap is to cultivate self confidence, avoid intimidation, keep away from false sympathy and charity, and place their faith in the Great God that made them.

MIND OVER MATTER

MIND OVER MATTER

The human mind like everything else created by God is emblematic of purity and righteousness. The mind is to a human being what the sunshine and the rain drops are to a flower, it's life itself. It begins to mould man's character, provides his happiness, measures his success and shapes his destiny in general even before he is old enough to make his first appearance in the classroom. One of the first questions to take root in a child's mind is the question of what is right and what is wrong. Everything from the cradle to the grave must necessarily be accepted, or rejected by the mind; in this fact alone depends the rise, or fall of mankind. If man is wise enough to fashion his life in keeping those things acceptable to the mind, he will naturally enjoy a normal, healthy, happy and prosperous life, but if he is unwise enough to fashion his life in keeping with those things not acceptable to the mind, he can expect no more out of life than what the wages of sin can provide him with. Often we hear the expression that people fail to follow the dictates of their conscience, which, of course, is only another way of saying they fail to act in keeping with their better judgment as directed by the mind. Be that as it may, it cannot be said in good faith that one's mind always directs them right. An unhealthy, cloudy and confused mind can do more to shatter one's future than all the physical imperfection combined. If man is to be successful at

all, he must cultivate leadership of mind and follow it. Human beings who live in search of failure, tragedy and turmoil of all kinds may best find it by going contrary to the directions of their own mind.

Much has been said and written about the conception and the versatility of the human mind. There are those who claim the mind is more acceptable to things that are evil than it is to things that are good. If there is any truth in this philosophy at all, it can be confined to those who have succeeded in poisoning their conscience against common decency. It would be more justifiable to say that the human mind, like all other things created by God, knows no evil. It is only when man destroys his original mind, does he possess an evil one.

The most learned criminologist knows there is no such thing as complete destruction of the mind to the power of good, except through insanity. Man may abuse his mind and drag it as deep into the mire as he likes, but never with its full consent. The matter of cultivating an evil mind and gaining its support in committing crime is for the most part a life long task, even the most ardent criminal that shows his victims no mercy can not completely persuade his mind to become a partner in his crime. It matters not what he does or how he does it, themind will not accept the guilt of his crime, but constantly condemns him for it. Knowing that mind is the master of all things under the jurisdiction of mankind, and was created by God, one may as well justify the fact that nothing in its original form is evil. If evil exists at all it can only do so insofar as

it can be shaped into a state of mind, and all that one has to do to avoid evil, and to know right from wrong is to follow the voice of their conscience.

Aside from the mind's power for good and its unwillingness to subscribe to evil, it can (if properly used) be made to hold the key to health. It is, of course, an undisputable fact that most of man's bodily imperfections can be traced to organic, or natural causes, but at the same time science reveals that much of man's bodily imperfections are not only created by mental disorders, but are fanned into flames for the same reason. While I am not a Christian Scientist, I am thoroughly convinced that there are a thousand and one reasons to believe there is more actual cure in a proper application of the mind than there is in a medical prescription. Thousands of people who are in ill health and living lives of physical torture could cast their infirmities aside if they would only learn the art of Healing their minds rather than their wounds. The mind is no different than any other organ of the human body, it is subjected to imperfections, it becomes sick and tired, which for the most part is brought about through radical abuses of the mind. It is incredible for man to assume the attitude that he can constantly abuse his mind and at the same time remain in a moral state of health. If the mind is sick, one is apt to be sick in general; if the mind is strong and healthy and kept free of oppression, one must not only enjoy good health, but be happy as well. The amount of health, happiness and prosperity that one can expect in life may well be based on their state of mind, or one's ability to form leadership of mind and to follow it.

Turning once again to the mass production of evil brought about by the abuse of the mind, which for the most part claims its reward in death, one can do no better than follow the school of thought that the mills of the gods grind slow, but exceedingly fine.

SEEING WITH THE BLIND

SEEING WITH THE BLIND

Among the many gifts to be found in the realm of the human family is the gift of the human mind, a controlling power, a power that enables man to master the elements and to rise above failure. Of all the millions of material things that you see around and about us, none can be claimed other than products of the human mind. I do not mean to imply that the human mind is sufficient within itself, it has subsidiaries; namely, its member instincts, never is man at his best until they work in perfect harmony with one another. However, the mind always remains the master of them all. The mind can at will accept or reject the findings of her member instincts. It matters not what instinct a mechanic is compelled to use in order to master a task, he must apply the findings of that instinct constantly to the mind for consent, for here alone is he able to find a correct answer. This naturally holds good when applied to the human eye, which can not at its best direct man any further than the surface of things. This is where the vision of the human eye stops, and exactly where the vision of the human mind begins. It does not require any stretch of imagination to learn that at least eighty percent of this world's goods are hidden things, things lying beneath the surface, far removed from the vision of the eye, and the only reason can be given to man's access to these many hidden things, is because

his real vision comes from the human mind rather than from its lesser member (the human eye). This should prove that no one possessing a normal mind is subjected to blindness, unless they are unwise enough to accept the loss of a lesser member over the workings of a superior one. This does not, however, answer the much disturbed question as to who is, or who is not blind; this decision can only be made by the individual himself. Unfortunately ninety percent of those who are unfortunate enough to lose their eye eight, make the wrong decision, and by doing so expose himself to lasting darkness while the brightest light that God ever created illuminates his path before him, but how about those persons who have lost their eyesight, and have been wise enough to make the right decision? Here we find persons without their eyesight, able to see with the same degree as those who have it. For instance, take the simple problem of reading traffic lights, this can be done with the same degree of accuracy without sight as it can be done with it. In this case all that is necessary for a blind person to do is to unite his mind with his hearing, disregard their lights and concentrate on the direction of the traffic. If he is moving East and West and the traffic is moving North and South, he knows that the lights are against him, he then concentrates on the amber light, which he knows has come into play by the force of habit exercised by anxious motorists to step on the gas creating a certain amount of motion, which in turn signifies that the light is turning in his favor. He then, after waiting a few moments sufficient to overcome the round curve traffic, proceeds to move with the traffic going in his direction. Here we come to

the question of crossing streets and boulevards not protected by lights, or a stop and go sign. The problem in this case multiplies into several branches of activity; instead of having just one or two obstacles to overcome, there are many of them. First he must know his location, the width of the street, the time of the day, and the amount of traffic that street or highway is subjected to. He must also take into consideration whether the street is level or constitutes a grade; this he should know in order to accurately judge the speed of the machine and to steer clear of the traffic that might be just coasting and hard to detect by sound. He also must exercise extreme caution to remain free from distracting sounds that might overcome those most important to his hearing. With these things quickly arranged in his mind (which takes only a few seconds) he formulates a sense of direction and proceeds to cross the streets, which he can do (if not disturbed) with as much safety as any other pedestrian.

The question that seems to puzzle the public more than any other is how a blind person can tell one street car or a bus from another, and how he can pick his right car, board it alone, find a seat and get off at the right point unassisted. Although there are many makes of cars, all of them can be detected by sound. In cases where there are conflicting sounds created by cars of the same make and moving in the same direction, it becomes a question of knowledge knowing one car from another by their chartered courses, which every well trained blind person is acquainted with. He may also tell one car from another

by the sound of the bell, or by it being a front or back entrance car, then again where it is convenient, he may walk a block or two, to a point where his car is automatically separated from the others, or he may walk to the nearest switch which he can utilize to a great advantage. To illustrate: suppose a blind person is waiting for a number 15 car at Baltimore and Gay streets, and during his wait he observes that the cars are moving East on Baltimore street, this tells him that the switch is set for East bound traffic, naturally therefore, he knows that the next car that will trip that switch will necessarily have to be a number 15 car. Now if this blind person is educated to travel alone, he knows that the number 15 car is a front entrance car, and at the sound of the switch he moves toward the entrance and then concentrates on the opening of the doors, one folding to the left and the other to the right forming a perfect guide. If not disturbed by the conductor or other passengers he can board the car with as much ease as anyone else; then by considering the hour of the day, or the direction in which the car is moving, he can tell if the car is crowded, or if there are any seats available. Most times the seat problem can be solved by detecting passengers standing in the aisle. In cases where he feels there are seats available, he makes an effort to locate one, which he can easily do by walking close enough to the seats to detect whether there are one or more persons in that seat. When he finds his approach to a seat is not disturbed by the presence of a passenger, he is reasonably sure that that seat contains only one passenger, or is empty altogether. This he finds out by moving his cane

ahead of him. It so happens in many cases that blind persons educated to travel alone are disturbed by some good soul, who wants to know where he is going, and at what point he is leaving the car and how he will know when he reaches his destination. As a rule he pays but little if any attention to the many streets in which he is crossing, but rather concentrates on some given point near his destination. This could be one of many things, it could be the crossing over or under a bridge, a left or right hand turn, the running through a switch or a dozen or more things that he might utilize to advantage. The only difficulty in which blind persons (educated to travel alone) encounters is the constant interference on the part of by-standers, or passengers, who through eagerness to assist him, will disturb him in such a way as to destroy his usefullness, especially his sense of direction and his power of concentration. Never is he exposed to a greater disadvantage than when he is interrupted by the conductor. Naturally in this case it is the purpose of the conductor to aid his passengers, but in so doing spreads the belief that the blind person is in need of assistance. The passengers observing this naturally grab at him from all directions, and when the show is all over and the victim has been fondly shoved into his seat, there is not much left of what was once a useful and intelligent person. I do not know of anything more pathetic than making an invalid out of a useful person. Although, the public do these things to be kind, and express their charitable instincts, they at the same time create the greatest hazard known to a useful person. Take the simple matter of crossing or walking the streets. It is not un-

usual for a well trained blind man (traveling the street constantly) to have his mind interrupted from one to three hundred times a day. This would not be so bad if it were not for the fact that ninety-nine out of every hundred interruptions are duplications, calling his attention to something that already lives in his mind. Usually no more than one person out of a hundred know how to assist a blind person constructively. For instance, take the simple task of helping him across the street (which is the right and charitable thing to do and should be appreciated) but by the time most pedestrians are through with him, he is scarcely a human being at all. Usually he is handled as though he were something mechanical, possessing neither intelligence or feeling. Judging from the things they will thoughtlessly call his attention to, it is quite evident that the average person does not consider that a blind person is human at all.

The things they say and do to him are simply ridiculous. It is almost impossible for him to enter a restaurant and receive any kind of service without being exposed to undue humility. The waiter or waitress (whichever the case may be) will without question proceed to stick a knife in one hand and a fork in another. Through an over desire to assist him, they will do everything, but the right thing, sometimes they will serve liquid food so close to him, that it becomes impossible to move without getting his hand or sleeve into it. In many cases they will serve the bread cut into small squares as though it were dice. I know of one case where a proprietor went to the extent of asking a

waitress to taste the coffee for a blind man. The most difficult problem in this matter lies in the search for an answer, where to place the blame for it all. Is it because there are so many hopeless invalids among the blind, or has the public been falsely educated to his correct vision of things? The real trouble comes when a blind person gains enough courage to go out and master his handicap. If he fights off public assistance (which is necessary to cultivate self reliance) he is condemned for it, condemned to such an extent that people do not hesitate to black guard him in open public, and discredit his efforts at every move. Usually this is so true that an ambitious blind person has to cultivate an iron will and a heart made of the same material in order to master his handicap. One of the more serious problems he has to contend with is the constant hammering away at his intelligence, which of course, is his sight.

Pick up a hand of sand and throw it into the eyes of any sighted person, it will stop him right in his tracks, so true is this that he would be unable to move until he first removed the sand. This in short is exactly what the public do when they constantly interrupt the mind of a blind person. Usually when this sort of thing goes on, day in and day out, year after year, it constitutes the worst sort of punishment. Searching through the pages of ancient history, we find one of the cruelest ways of putting a criminal to death was by adjusting him under a leaking tank of water, which was done in such a way that the water dropped constantly on the forehead. We all know that a drop of water within itself is harmless, but to allow it to drop

constantly in one place over a long period of time will constitute the worst punishment known to mankind. History tells us that prisoners condemned to this sort of punishment preferred any other kind of death in preference to it. It is not the intention of this article to discredit, or condemn public assistance to the blind, but to bring the public to a firm realization that although a man is blind he is still human and I would say that the public should assist blind people, and that blind persons should accept that assistance. After all ninety percent of blind persons need assistance, and inasmuch as the public does not know one from the other, it is the only charitable thing to do. However, they should at least use some precaution in their approach to blind persons (particularly those persons traveling alone) the right manner of approaching a blind pedestrian would be to ask him if he needs assistance. I venture to say (even in cases where it would not be needed) that blind persons would submit to it. This should be done for the promotion of friendship and human kindness if for no other reason.

CHRISTIAN HOPE

CHRISTIAN HOPE

People the world over from the heights of civilization to the heart of the jungle cherish the hopes of life everlasting in one form or another, even in the heart of the most ardent infidel there is to be found a burning desire for a life beyond physical death. While some express this hope in various forms of christianity, others bow down before idols and false gods. The thing that counts most in every case (be they right or wrong) is the spirit of eternal hope. Hope, whether it is based on the natural or supernatural order of things becomes man's greatest incentive to forge ahead, and to meet and overcome the many perplexing problems of life. Hope is something that everyone has an equal right to and can enjoy without the fear of being deprived of it by earthly forces. Often you hear people say that their hopes have been destroyed, this can only be true inasfar as the objects of their hope is concerned, and can be applied only to things material. Everyone knows there are people who take a certain amount of pride in destroying the hopes of others, which is always found to be based on greed, envy, or a thirst for power. Regardless of whatever happens to the object of man's hopes based on the natural order of things, the same cannot be said of the object of the greatest hope known to the human family; namely, Christian hope. Here we have a hope solely of a divine origin created by God, a hope that if removed from the universe

would plunge mankind into chaos and place him on the same level with the animal kingdom.

Christian hope not only encourages man to rise above adversity and to endure suffering and poverty, but provides for him a goal that is eternal. With this hope in mind, one may easily build within his own heart a Chrstian edifice in which the light of Jesus Christ may burn brighter than in the most luxurious tabernacle.

Church goers the world over enjoy the satisfaction of congregational service to God and the satisfaction of taking their gifts to the altar of the church emblematic of their own faith. Christians love to go to church not only because it affords them an opportunity to make some sort of sacrifice to obtain eternal reward, but because it affords them an opportunity of making an outward expression of their faith that is good for the soul. Thousands of unfortunate human beings that never have the opportunity of going to church at all, also cherish the hope of congregational service and an outward expression of their faith, simply because they have been beset with poverty and physical imperfection, they are denied the opportunity of going to church, or having the word of God brought to them.

While Jesus Christ chose to be born in the midst of poverty and spent his life working among the poor, the afflicted and the sinner, we find only a few who have been ordained to exemplify the teachings of Jesus Christ, willing to follow his footsteps to the doors of the poor and the afflicted.

At times one is forced into the belief that the

churches have strayed away from the true mission of Jesus Christ, and are only interested in those who are physically able to attend their services. Be this as it may, no one has the right to sit in judgment against the religious practices of others, but one thing we can all be reasonably sure that Jesus Christ has not turned over his mission on earth to churches alone. His spirit still dwells among those that he himself dwelt and everyone has the opportunity through the grace of God to shape his own heart into a tabernacle. If Christ is to be found anywhere on earth, He is to be found in the human heart, particularly the hearts of the poor and the afflicted, who are always nearer their Maker than the average person. I do not mean to encourage the belief that poverty and physical imperfection is necessarily a guarantee to salvation. Everything when subjected to abuse is evil; one may turn his afflictions and his surroundings in life into a weapon of destruction just as easily as he can turn them into a power for good. Allowing that some do abuse their opportunity to gain the grace of God and the right of salvation, it can be found less among the poor and the afflicted than any other class of people. Many people whose lives are marked with poverty and their bodies torn with infirmity have been able to accept Christian hope to such a degree as to shape it into a faith of their own. Knowing as they do that everyone has the right to communion with God through the medium of prayer, they have been able in many instances to serve God with a greater satisfaction than those who occupy the pews of the many churches. Christian hope when added to a

prayer that is sincere brings peace to man's soul, joy to the angels, and opens up the gates of heaven to the human race.

GIVING THE BLIND A CHANCE

GIVING THE BLIND A CHANCE

Around and around the wheel of progress spins, releasing her cargo into the arms of her benefactors at every turn. Although she is kept in motion by the hands of countless human beings, but few seem to benefit from her many sources and opportunities. Turn as she will, try as she may, to keep the course chartered for her mother nature, she constantly finds her cogs choked with the theoretical experiments of the efficiency expert and the political butcher. Cycle after cycle and as far into the past as the human mind can penetrate, we find the efforts of man to change the course of nature, and the natural law of supply and demand meeting with disappointment and lasting failure.

Seldom ever in the history of the human race has man been at such a loss to master the simple task of supply and demand as the present time. While there are only a few who are willing to find their way out of the forest by skillful means, the average official in high places seems just as willing to buy or legislate his way out.

One may say in all fairness to truth and accuracy that there are enough of this world's goods on hand, (if properly distributed) to completely eliminate the poor, and to provide a comfortable living for every citizen in America. Regardless of what one may say about this problem, or what opinion he may form of it, the real

responsibility for it all can be safely traced to capital hill. Here we find the government paying farmers not to raise hogs, not to grow wheat, cotton, corn and many other products essential to the welfare of her citizens. We find taxes upon taxes adjusted in such a way that only the dead can escape them. We find mass production and the thirst for speed rendering man jobless at the age of forty-five. We find barriers set up through the process of law that denies every handicapped person the God given right to earn a livelihood. Thousands daily are being asked to overcome barrier after barrier in order to find a place in the sun and to exercise his rights to work; as difficult as this task may appear, people with their full faculties and a will to persevere may some day realize his hopes, and take his turn at the wheel of progress. Hope is and always will be man's greatest inspiration; it strengthens self reliance and lights his path before him, but what about the many thousands of human beings who do not have the full use of their faculties and whose hopes have been shadowed by barriers erected in their path by the process of law. I refer, of course, to the million or more handicapped people living under the American flag. In particular I refer to the one hundred and twenty thousand blind persons of which eighty percent are jobless, and always will be jobless as long as he is being asked by law to surrender his rights, that the rights of others may be protected. This in short is exactly what the workers compensation act means to handicapped persons and particularly the blind. I do not mean to apply that the workman's compensation act directly forbids handicapped persons to work by law, but it

does demand that captains of industry and the supervision of commercial houses insure their employees. Therefore, inasmuch as handicapped persons (and particularly blind persons) are not covered by this act, the law does indirectly forbid the employment of handicapped persons. While this law affects handicapped persons in general, its worst hazard is stretched across the path of the blind, it has not only closed the doors of the industrial world, but has created gigantic barriers in his path in the commercial.

There are hundreds of blind persons located in every industrial center in the United States that are masters of their trade. Although, they are handicapped with blindness they could, if given the opportunity, still work at these trades. In Baltimore city alone there are at least five hundred industrial positions that could be filled with sightless employees, if these unfortunate human beings could be covered by insurance. It matters not how well the blind could fulfill these positions, nor how much the captain of these industries would like to employ him, they find the insurance barrier firmly erected in their path, automatically closing the doors of the industry against him. Naturally when one is made to realize that his hopes of entering into the industrial field have been destroyed, he turns to the next best opportunity, the commercial field, which for the most part has something to offer men in most every walk of life, except the blind. While there are no barbiers set up against him through the process of law, he meets with a hazard that is more difficult to overcome than all others combined, namely the hazard of non-

recognition, the failure on the part of the public to accept a blind person in any other role than that of a plain beggar. Every day we encounters thousands of persons earning their livelihood through the art of salesmanship, selling everything from needles to real estate, but as long as they are sighted persons they are accepted as salesmen and given the chance to make their salestalk and demonstrate their merchandise, and they will, if given the proper opportunity, gain the confidence of their customers and sell their ware. This, however, does not hold good when applied to blind persons selling the same line of merchandise. It matters not how well he is dressed, or what the nature of his canvass may be, as soon as he is detected as being blind, the proprietors of business houses will without question or thought ring the cash register and offer him charity, which for the most part amounts to no more than a few pennies. Even in cases where he is granted the opportunity to talk or demonstrate his merchandise, he is dealt with in such a way as to be made to feel that his efforts are being subjected to charitable instincts. There are, of course, some blind men who through the force of an iron will, can persevere over a long period of time and overcome this handicap, but these are exceptions. More than ninety-five percent of blind persons, who undertake to earn their livelihood through the art of salesmanship find it a, hopeless task and in a short time find themselves in a position to make a choice between scientific or outright begging, or else become a permanent subject of charity. You find captains of industries, proprietors of business houses and men in high places of all kinds making effort after effort to curb the beggar and eliminate

him from our city streets. In many cases these efforts are justified, but one might say without the fear of contradiction that by far the largest percentage of beggars are not beggars of their own choice, but rather through force of circumstances. Beggars in a sense are a product that can be manufactured, when man sets up barriers by law such in nature as to deprive him of a livelihood, then refused to accept an honest effort on his part to earn a decent living. They are guilty of engaging in the inhuman business of manufacturing beggars. You talk about justice, opportunity, good fellowship, a place in the sun and that all men are born equal, evidently these things do exist and hold promise to many, but they mean little if anything to the blind. This is not only true, but will always be true as long as the blind trusts the shaping of his destiny too much to sighted persons. Not until he is willing to fight his own battle and turn his hopes to a legislative program will he be able to take his turn at the wheel of progress.

HANDS OVER YOUR EYES

HANDS OVER YOUR EYES

The most perplexing problem confronting those who take up the art of public speaking is the problem of what to do with their hands. Men in particular often add to their embarrassment by shoving their hands into their pockets, or keeping them in constant search for something in which to satisfy their emotion. The average person making public appearances or addresses seems to be more concerned as to what to do with their hands than they are in the outcome of their adventure. This condition to the average observer is what is commonly know as stage fright, or the workings of an inferiority complex. Theoretically this could be right in either case but viewing it from the standpoint of psychology. Theoretical explanations on the subject fail to give anything but the correct answer. The hand, like the eye, is but a servant to the human mind which directs and controls its every conscious movement. It's only when people fail to keep the workings of the hand under the supervision of the mind do they lose control of their motions and subject themselves to loose acrobatic drama. The motions of the hand when properly controlled by the mind have a language of their own and in many instances can express what words fail to express. Well trained and successful public speakers never lose control of their hands, or are they ever at a loss to know what to do with them; but rather

utilize their value in connection with the power of concentration in putting across their subject.

Often we hear the expresson that the hand is quicker than the eye, be this true or false it would appear that arguments in support of this claim are based on the fact that the hand operates under the supervision of the mind, which moves with a greater rapidity than the eye. It would be consistent to assert that the eye is not a valuable asset to the workings of the hand for there are many things the hand can not accomplish without the support of the eye, but inasmuch as both the hand and the eye are directed by the mind, it's only fair to class whatever assistance the hand receives from the eye as being of a subsidiary nature. One may well justify the claim that the greater part of the things accomplished by the hand are done without direct support of the eye. I have reference, of course, to those things that appeal exclusively to the sense of thought and touch which are never visible to the activities of the eye.

In search of a fair and unbiased decision fixing the value of man's instincts, one is compelled to take into consideration the ability of each instinct to function alone. Regardless of whatever conclusion may be reached in fixing the value of the eye, it is the only instinct that has no working capacity of its own, it must and does appeal to the mind for each and everything that meets its gaze; whereas the sense of touch, hearing and smell do have a working capacity of their own. For instance, the mind is often placed in a position of not being able to render a fair decision on the

strength of information furnished by the eye, and has to appeal to the sense of touch, hearing, or smell for a correct answer. While the sense of touch, hearing and smell function under the direct supervision of the mind in the same degree as the eye, each of them hold key positions that are indispensable in supplying information to the mind.

People often emerge from a rest, or relaxation period only to find their hands fast asleep, lying like lead beside them; while this condition is only temporary, it does compel one to realize just what the loss of the hand and the sense of touch would mean to them. No man, or combination of men could fix the value of the hand and when you take into consideration that the hand controls the sense of touch, one may safely classify the service rendered by the hand as being superior to that of the eye. Yes, people may lose their eye sight and through the use of common sense overcome it, but no man can suffer the loss of his hands which destroys the sense of touch without being reduced to what virtually amounts to the closing of a chapter to one's life.

The importance of the hand and the sense of touch controlled by it holds within its keeping more than two-thirds of man's constructive value, be it the erection of a corner stone, or skyscrapper. Aside from its enormous constructive value the hand also forms man's first line of defense against danger and hazards of all kinds. For instance, man may see danger through the sense sight and know how to overcome it by the application of thought, but his hands are always his chief means of escape. Important as they are, probably less appre-

ciated and receive less credit for their accomplishments than anything else in which man is dependent. It is not until one has lost a hand, or even a finger does he realize the value of them. One of the real reasons that man fails to realize the value of his instincts is because their power to serve him are so varied and enormous as to become commonplaced.

The only people who know and really appreciate their hands and their sense of touch are the blind, who by virtue of their handicap are compelled to cultivate them and rely upon them as secondary sight. Experience teaches that it is possible for blind people to cultivate the sense of touch to such a degree as to be equal to fifty percent vision. This is born out in the fact that many blind people become more useful with their hands after the loss of sight than before. Blind people, who have cultivated their sense of touch along with the sense of hearing can accomplish with their hands just about what sighted people can accomplish with theirs. In connection with this statement it is only fair to estimate that blind people, who have thoroughly cultivated their instincts and have learned the proper use of them, can accomplish in their own way just about eighty (80) percent of the things accomplished by sighted people.

HOME SWEET HOME

HOME SWEET HOME

Of all the magnificent edifices and places of unusual interest that appeals to the imagination and the desires of the human race there is none so complete as the humble place we have learned to know as home. Of all that has been said about it in poetry, or song, no one has ever been quite able to fully exemplify its many virtues. Call it man's castle, seat of a nation, haven of refuge, or anything you like, it is the one place on earth that claims man's attention and devotion above all others.

Occasionally people will take to extensive travel and explore the wonders of the world. Sometime their visit is brief and again it may extend over a period of years, but be it brief, or otherwise, mankind has never been able to enjoy the quiet, peace and comfort equal to that afforded him in the sanctity of his own home. Everyone who has owned a home of his own and has been unfortunate enough to lose it, realizes the importance of a home and just how empty life can be without it.

People may share their wealth, happiness and knowledge with one another, but no one has been able to share their home with others without affecting their happiness and their personal liberties essential to life that is complete. It is evident that many people who have never had a home of their own and who have

spent their lives sharing the homes of relatives, friends or strangers do enjoy a certain amount of home comfort. Of course this could only be true inasfar as they are financially able to pay their way and safeguard their independence. People the world over with the right amount of cash in their pockets and without family ties, or obligations to others, may call any place he can hang his hat home. For instance, what about the the thousands of unfortunate persons who are not financially able to pay their way and who are forced to share the homes of others at the mercy of charity?

There are living in the state of Maryland over fifteen hundred blind persons of which eleven hundred are residents of Baltimore city and vicinity. No more than forty percent of the entire fifteen hundred are married and less than fifty percent of those that are married enjoy the satisfaction of their own home, either through ownership, or rental basis. As for the remainder making up the larger majority of blind people (both married and single) whose earnings are far beneath a decent standard of living, the best they can expect is just a mere shelter with no more choice in the matter than that equal to jumping into boiling water to escape the flames beneath it.

When one realizes that the average combined income of blind people does not exceed thirty dollars a month (unless he caters to begging) it is easy to understand the limited amount of home comfort available to blind people. I do not know any class of people who would appreciate a home of their own any more than the blind, yet there are more homeless blind people in

proportion than any other class of human beings. It is not unusual to find blind persons living in old dilapidated deserted houses, basements, shacks built by boys, and many other places unfit for a human being in any walk of life.

One only has to visit the remote boarding house districts to find out just what life means to many blind people. Here we find a condition that is anything but inviting to one's morals. I do not mean to insinuate that all cheap boarding houses are loosely operated, nor do I mean to imply there are no good people living in them. However, it is only fair to say that many of such places are given over to poverty and loose living that creates a greater hazard to blind people than blindness itself.

The thing that seems to be uppermost in the minds of everyone is to sympathize with the blind. I do not know of any class of handicapped people that receives more sympathy (and rightly so) than the blind. After all it is not blindness that makes life so difficult for them, but rather their surroundings, lack of opportunity to earn a livelihood, the loss of independence and particularly the lack of opportunity to provide a home for themselves.

Blind people as a whole do not differ from other people. They enjoy congregating together, they love to smoke, listen to the radio, or the talking book, and many other things enjoyed by others. While most blind people living in boarding houses, or sharing the home of others do enjoy these things to a certain degree which is anything but complete, no one enjoys

anything as they should when they are made to feel that their access to the comforts of a home are an intrusion on the rights of others.

It is not the intentions of the writer to cast shadows on the many blind people who have comfortable homes of their own and peacefully share the homes of others, but rather to expose a critical condition in which many blind people find themselves. If the blame for these conditions can be charged to anyone at all they can best be placed on the door steps of society.

It seems to me that the only answer to this problem lies in the fulfillment of a movement on the part of the Blind Brotherhood of Maryland, Inc., to create a home for the poor and homeless blind people. This coupled with a sincere effort on the part of the State to appropriate the necessary funds essential to a decent standard of living could amply solve the problem.

WHITE CANES

WHITE CANES

White Canes as a safety measure or a protection to blind persons had its origin in Germany shortly after the close of the nineteenth century. At first it was accepted as something experimental, it later developed into a forceable act of courtesy and over a period of years spread to all the principal countries and cities in Europe.

Shortly after the close of the war in the year of nineteen-nineteen it began to make its appearance in America, principally in the large cities along the Eastern seaboard. Although the early introduction of the White Cane in America did not differ from its uses in Europe, the volume of traffic which is far greater in the American cities than those of European countries soon shaped the White Cane idea as being essential to the safety of blind persons. Over a period of twenty years the White Cane idea spread to all the principal cities in America. In America we find the adoption of the white cane utilized to a far greater advantage than in any of the European countries. Up to and including June 1, of nineteen thirty-nine (1939) we find six states and thirty-five major American cities who have written the white cane idea into law. These laws make it compulsory on the part of motorists and operators of all vehicles to stop for the white cane (held

in the hand of a blind person) just as he stops for a red light, or a stop and go sign.

The adoption of the white cane idea into law for the state of Maryland (the sixth state to adopt such a law) had its birthplace in the Blind Brotherhood of Maryland, Inc. The Brotherhood fought for the passage of this act exclusively alone, not only was the organization forced to fight alone, but it was compelled to break down opposition on the part of other blind organizations that continuously opposed its passage.

The white cane idea was first introduced at Annapolis in the year of 1935, and was defeated. It was later introduced in the City Council of Baltimore, in the year of 1937. At this time it was passed by the City Council by a vote of 16 to 2, and was later declared invalid by the City Solicitor. The Brotherhood at this time being unwilling to give up the fight, again turned their hopes to Annapolis where the bill was reintroduced as a state wide measure in the year of 1939. This time, however, the Brotherhood was able to secure the support of Senators, John J. Callin and James Feehley, who were able to secure the passage of the bill almost unanimously. This bill was signed by Governor Herbert R. O'Conor on May 3rd, 1939 and became effective on June 1, of the same year.

Apart from the Brotherhood's interest in this bill and the support it received from the State Delegation at Annapolis, there is no one that deserves more credit for the adoption of the White Cane Law in Maryland than Mr. Ferdinand A. Faber, a member of the Blind

Brotherhood and Chairman of the White Cane committee. Mr. Faber not only gave rise to the white cane idea in Maryland, but continuously stuck to it when most everyone else was willing to wash their hands of it. Mr. Faber is a blind man, 48 years of age and has been a life long friend to those who walk the same path with him.

Many people are of the belief that the uses of the white cane are confined to assisting the blind across the street, or to signify that a person carrying a white cane is blind and needs assistance. The white cane means far more than this to any person who has fully educated himself to its many uses. The person who has educated himself to the proper use of the cane more or less is inclined to accept it as a companion, and as a rule will place more confidence in it than a guide. It is common knowledge to blind persons who are trained to walk the streets, that he is often misled or falsely directed by persons who volunteer their service to help him. This not only breaks his sense of direction, but exposes him to undue danger, whereby, the use of the cane and power of concentration he is able to keep his sense of direction and observe his surroundings. The proper use of the white cane not only helps him to keep his direction, but safeguards him by walking into open cellar ways, steps, poles, or what other obstacles that might be in his path. To illustrate: an engineer, who is accustomed to the uniform sound of the machinery about him can detect the slightest change of sound in the operation of that machinery. Again a person may sit in the presence of a clock for hours without

paying any attention to it, but the moment that clock stops he will detect it. These same things hold good with a blind person who is accustomed to the uniform sound of the cane. The minute he detects the slightest change in the uniform sound of his cane he knows that something has gone wrong and uses precaution until he is out of danger. It would not be hard for one to write page after page on the uses of the white cane alone.

It is the wish of the Blind Brotherhood that all blind, or partly blind persons provide themselves with and use a white cane. The Brotherhood will on request furnish any blind person in the state of Maryland with a white cane free of charge. In order that this wish may be granted, all that one will have to do is to address their communications to Mr. Ferd. A. Faber, 2206 Eastern Ave., Baltimore, Maryland. It is also necessary they state their height and give other necessary particulars pertaining to their address and means of communication.

TODAY AND TOMORROW

Beyond the setting sun and the break of dawn
Lies tomorrow, a day still unborn.
Like the stars that glitter and shine
She will take her place in the march of time.
From the hill top, to the valley low
She will spread her sunshine and her glow.
In her wake, some will rise and others will fall
Some will prosper, and others will answer her eternal call.
Like the great creator, that made her a day
She will open her treasure, to those she may.
Out of the East, to the far distant West
She will gather her harvest, unto her breast.
While man toils and the doves wing their way
She will take her toll, and exact her pay.
It matters not, whether we be rich, or poor
She will invite us all, to her far away shore.
And if tomorrow, we wish to transcend
Our labors of today, must begin.
Let us not despair, of the things that are gone
For tomorrow, they may be re-born.
So if our efforts of today, falter or sway
Turn your hopes to tomorrow, another day.

CHARITY IN REVERSE

CHARITY IN REVERSE

Charity like a rose that unfurls its petals to the morning dew was created by God and dedicated to the love and happiness of mankind, born with its founder Jesus Christ in the stable of Bethlehem more than nineteen hundred years ago. Charity has not only been accepted as a continuation of Christ's mission on earth, but the key note to civilization as well. True charity as exemplified by its founder, Jesus Christ (and those loyal to his mission) is something truly of a divine origin and can only be found to live in the hearts of those given over to a divine love. No one can over estimate the virtue of true charity and its contribution to the human family in general.

People may contribute their happiness and success to as many things as they like, but no one can deny that mankind is as much governed by a supreme power as are the planets and the green earth in which he lives. Man, when exposed to the dictates of his own human nature, becomes a rebellious creature and usually finds more satisfaction in the destruction than the construction of things. This is best borne out in the fact that the greatest show on earth open to the gaze of mankind is the destruction of his neighbor's property by fire. No fire is ever too large, or can last too long for the vast ordinance that assembles about it. Even though the spectator realizes that men's lives are at stake and what

they are gazing upon means the wiping out of his fellowman's life long savings, it is still a fascinating show to him.

If man is civilized at all and is able to extend to his fellow man the things civilization expects of him, it is only because he has been visited by the hand of God, who has instilled in his heart two of the greatest of the supernatural gifts known to mankind; namely, divine charity and love. After all it is these two great supernatural gifts that elevates him above the common instincts of a savage.

The only one and true answer that can be given for the great crime wave that is sweeping the land and man's thirst for revenge and his brother's blood is because those who commit crime have divorced themselves from their charitable instincts and a love for their brother that is divine.

Charity in short is a continuation of the ideals and principles of its founder, Jesus Christ and is never true to form unless associated with love, sympathy and kindness. Although many so called charity workers operating under a disguised cloak of charity have tried to twist it into anything but the right thing, they have never been successful enough to abuse it and at the same time escape its deadly reaction.

Of all the great gifts placed at the disposal of mankind and dedicated to his comfort and happiness there is none quite so beneficial and substantial in relieving the suffering of the unfortunate. As true as this may be of charity in its true form, there is none that has a

greater reaction when used in connection with commercial and economic advantages.

Charity in its true form does not differ in nature from all the rest of the great and noble gifts created by God, and placed at the disposal of mankind. It has its reaction and when abused, or misused shapes itself into a gigantic means of destruction.

Where for instance, can there be found a greater and more humble servant to mankind than the river? It carries his cargo, turns the wheels of his industries, supplies him with food, in fact it works for him unceasingly twenty-four hours a day. The river is and has always been man's greatest inspiration to go forward. No book, or set of books would be sufficient in which to record the worth of a river. The river, like fire and electricity, it too has its reaction and when abused can over a short period of a few days destroy what it takes man years to rebuild. This is particularly true since the beginning of the twentieth century, during which time man in his haste to accumulate wealth has destroyed the soil and the forest that form her water shed and by so doing overtax her normal capacity to serve man in her true form.

Volume after volume may be written about the advantages of a river and her reactionary powers. Again what can be said about the river can likewise be said about fire, electricity and many other natural resources dedicated to the service of mankind. Let the reactionary forces of natural resources be what they may, combine them all together and they create only a shadow of destruction when compared with the reaction-

ary forces of charity. After all, destruction wrought by fire, water and electricity is for the most part brief and confined to small areas, and oftentimes pave the way for greater things. Great cities have grown out of the ashes of a fire, or the debris of a flood, but what is left of a human being when exposed to the lasting reactionary forces of charity is beyond comprehension.

Take the most highly developed educated person (let his occupation in life be what it may) and place him in a position where he has to depend on charity over a long period of time and he becomes a moral, social and physical wreck. It not only destroys his independence, self respect and ambition, but renders him useless and indifferent toward the things around and about him.

One has only to turn the pages of history back to the beginning of the twentieth century to recall that the people who were unfortunate enough to be helped by charity treated it with the utmost secrecy, and in many cases hid themselves from public view. What a contrast to the present day, a period in which we find approximately one-fifth of the nation's population permanent victims of charity and equally as many working on projects separated from charity only by name or a few letters of the alphabet. Yes, here in free and prosperous America, refined people starving in the shadow of warehouses bulging with food and wearing rags in the midst of enough clothing to clothe half of the world. Is this because our national leaders and efficiency experts have lost control of supply and demand, or is it because they are contented to keep a leaking pail

full by constantly pouring water into it in preference to finding the leak? Whatever it is, it is quite obvious that the attempt to support one-fourth of the American population by charitable means is slowly but surely being shaped into a reality. No longer do the vast majority of people who have self respect and independence crushed out of them by a false situation regard charity as a secret, or are they ashamed of it. It is not a difficult problem to find people every day and every where boasting of being on relief and what they are receiving from charitable organizations. I do not, however, desire to spread the belief that all the people that are on relief, or fed by the hand of charity are accepting the situation lying down. The average American (be he ever so humble) is too proud and has too much faith in himself and the future of his country to accept the situation as permanent. Every day and every where we meet people who would rather face death than to be caught in a dragnet that threatens to destroy their self respect, and the God given right to earn a livelihood free from charity.

Multiply or subtract, view the situation from any angle you like, the facts are that the millions of unfortunate American citizens who have been forced to join a large growing army of relief workers and charity seekers are slowly, but surely being administered a dose of poison that is detrimental to the moral, social and civil standard of living.

Regardless of how desperate this situation looms against the horizon, or how many years it takes the future generations to live it down, people with their full

faculties enjoy the satisfaction of being physically able to fight for their rights, and through the simple process of mind over matter will provide for themselves a place in the sun. Be this as it may, what about the large army of which one hundred and twenty thousand blind people are a part? Here we discover a situation particularly among blind people that is beyond the power of words to express. Only about forty thousand out of the one hundred and twenty thousand blind people living in America have a home which they can call their own. The remaining eighty thousand are either homeless, or forced through the lack of funds to live in remote, tenant, or cheap boarding house districts. Districts which for the most part are not only detrimental to his morals, but weakens his ambition to rise above the depths in which they have fallen.

Two out of every three blind persons living in America (and in the state of Maryland as well) are solely depending on charity for the sustenance of life. Sustenance he is forced to obtain either through charitable organizations, relatives, friends, or else cater to outright begging, which many prefer to running the risk of being classed as a public charge.

It is the general belief of the average citizen in Maryland, and elsewhere that the blind are entitled to and are receiving a pension of thirty dollars a month. While I am aware of the fact that the Federal Government and the various states jointly appropriate a limited amount of funds annually for blind relief, I am somewhat at a loss to understand what is meant by the word pension, when boiled down to where the

truth can penetrate the surface, means no more than a cheap English dole operating under the strictest censorship.

How, for instance, can you associate the word pension with a relief fund that falls so short of serving its purpose as to mean no more than a common stop gap to starvation?

The word pension according to the dictionary means a designated cash allowance paid in annual, or monthly sums to its recipients, as a reward for past and valuable service, meaning in short the recognition of one's past contribution to society.

May I ask in all fairness and respect to charitable organizations and their workers if this consideration ever enters into their dealings with people unfortunate enough to be on relief, or are they forced through rigid and ill-constructed laws to forget about one's past contribution to society and accept them only as an outcast?

Every blind person (and others as well) who are on relief know only too well that their first and essential step toward getting their name on the relief roll is to declare themselves to be paupers, strip themselves of their independence and their right to earn additional sums without being deducted from the sum alloted to them by relief agencies. This is best borne out in the fact that all blind persons on relief are obligated by law to report their earnings, which is carefully checked by the department of welfare. In the final analysis we find that blind persons who are unfortunate enough to be

fed by the reactionary hand of charity placed in a position as to be denied of the most essential blessing to blind people, namely the occupation of mind. I do not however, desire to establish the belief that blind persons on relief cannot if they wish, earn from ten, fifteen, or twenty dollars a month, but I do, however, wish to justify the fact that such sums earned by them are promptly deducted from his so called pension of thirty dollars per month. In the final analysis this means they are no better off at the expiration of each month than if they had stayed home and indulged in the destructive business of idleness.

Here incidentally (through lack of occupation of mind) lies the greatest hazard known to the moral, social and physical welfare of blind people. The only reason that can be given for their remaining in such a state of life is not only because they know that their earnings are of no avail, but they run the risk of having their name removed from the relief roll. Here we find a condition that is not only cruel to blind people, but forces many of them (against their will) into racketeering, begging, drunkedness and many other evils apart from that which goes into the making of a respectable law abiding citizen.

Everybody in every walk of life who are in a position to know what it is to enjoy three full meals a day, enough clothing to be comfortable and a decent place in which to live (to which every human being is entitled) knows very well that the best any one could do on a dollar a day is to just eat, go in rags and confine their living quarters to the slums, or else cast their lot

with relatives, friends, or some good soul who is kind enough to welcome them into their dwellings. May I, therefore, in the name of common decency ask what becomes of blind people who are forced to live on a dollar a day or less when they are in need of medical care, surgical treatment, necessary funds for the upkeep of insurance and many other things essential to a normal life? The one and only true answer to this inhuman question can be best found in the corridors of State Hospital for the insane, the poor house and every other house of refuge where blind people can be taken and placed as a permanent charge on the state.

Again may I ask in fairness to common decency and American hospitality if blindness is not punishment enough itself, besides being subjected to hunger, cold, unnecessary ill health and many other means of prosecution that seems to fall in the wake of blindness?

Now it is not the intention of the writer of this article to cast shadows on the State Board of Charity, the Welfare Board, or any other state or city charitable organization or their workers. After all the best charitable organizations and those connected with them can do is to follow the law and go as far as their appropriations permit them. I have no quarrel with these good people, but rather prefer to extend to them sympathy and admiration for trying to perform their duty by walking around on a pair of broken down crutches made in Annapolis.

FANNING THE FLAMES

FANNING THE FLAMES

The physical make up of man is as every one knows, anything but perfect. Thousands spend their entire lives in universities, hospitals and in the study of medicine and surgery without ever being able to discover all the physical defects to which man is subjected. Man at his best goes through life walking through two great walls of physical defects, so numerous as to strike out at him at every step. So intense are the many physical defects, including diseases and afflictions of all kinds as to become so common placed that man never thinks of them until visited by them. This of course is a question of mind over matter, which is and has always been man's greatest weapon against the approach of diseases and afflictions of all kind. As long as man is able to free himself of fear, or prevent himself from crossing bridges before he arrives at them, he will always be able to make the most of any situation when, if ever, it becomes a reality. Unfortunately however, this does not seem to be the case in the lives of the average person, who insists upon remaining in the footlights of the past or dramatizing to themselves the destructed elements of the future. Naturally if man is to be successful in overcoming the many pitfalls and snares that beset his journey through life, he must be able to realize and accept any situation at its full value, dodging the issue or trying to make a silk

purse out of a sow's ear does not profit man anything, but rather prompts him to base his hopes on fiction and lady luck in which lies the greatest hazard to physically handicapped people. This fact coupled with intimidation and self pity has (in a great degree) been more responsible for the loss of man's usefulness and his surrender to his handicap than all the physical imperfections combined.

Among the many handicaps in which man is subjected, the handicap that is more dreaded than any other and is hardest for man to overcome, is the handicap of blindness. Blindness is often referred to as capital affliction, capital indeed to many who evidently dread its approach equally to that of death itself. Many persons with failing eyesight to the extent of becoming blind actually go blind in their own mind long before their last ray of light is expelled from the physical eye, which means in short the acceptance of the situation in advance. So true is this state of mind toward the approach of blindness that scarcely one person out of every hundred meet the situation honestly. Thoughtless persons facing this situation never stop to adjust their other instincts to take the place of their lost member, the physical eye.

In every case (save a few exceptions) blind persons and those that face the prospect of blindness assume a helpless attitude, which for the most part is agitated by building up conditions that do not exist other than in a state of mind. Just how man arrives at the conclusion that blindness is a capital affliction I am at a loss to understand. Surely nothing can be considered capital that

is forced to labor under the predomination of a superior instinct. The physical eye at its best can not be rated any higher than just one of the five instincts in which the human body is endowed. Surely common sense teaches that the physical eye is but a servant to the human mind which checks and controls its every movement. The only satisfactory answer to this perplexing problem lies in the fact that human beings in general overrate the actual value of the eye to such an extent as to overlook the value of their other instincts. Why, for instance should any one be blind with a mind in which to see? Seeing things through the physical eye without the consent of the mind constitutes the only true state of blindness, and the only reason that can be given as to why blind persons and persons facing the prospect of blindness cannot square themselves with this situation is simply because they associate themselves too closely with the worst pair of enemies known to mankind, intimidation and self pity. These two enemies when accepted jointly and permitted to work in the life of man constitute by far a greater affliction than blindness itself. The best that one can expect when they associate themselves with these two great monsters of destruction is to surrender themselves to a life of complete idleness and self made misery.

The writer of this article has been sightless for twenty years, without ever being blind a single day, and I am able to say without fear of contradiction that I have found the loss of sight the mildest of all afflictions and the easiest one to master.

This statement is supported by the fact that the loss of sight is a stimulant to the growth of the other in-

stincts, particularly the mind, hearing and the sense of touch, this of course is only found to hold good in cases where the mind is not exposed to oppression. To justify the statement that the loss of sight is the mildest of all afflictions and the easiest one to overcome, one has only to place himself in a position of making a choice between the loss of sight and other afflictions that have no reconstructive value, but rather take the opposite course of providing a short cut to the grave. For instance, who would choose cancer, tuberculosis, leprosy, small pox and many other capital afflictions that have nothing to offer, other than a positive death sentence. Persons who are blind and who are in normal health otherwise, should be thankful for their lot in life. Of course, it is easy to condemn and just as easy to talk, but no one but a coward will run from a situation when he knows he is in a position to fight his way to victory. The sooner blind persons and those facing the prospect of blindness as well, will resolve from self pity and intimidation and learn a little more about their physical make up, particularly the uses of their other instincts over and above the physcal eye, will they be able to master their handicap and see again in the truest sense of the word.

HIDDEN ENEMIES

HIDDEN ENEMIES

Intimidation and fear has always provided the most satisfactory stepping stones to failure where self determination has always constituted the driving force in back of every successful undertaking. One of the foremost and direct paths leading to the success of any kind is found in the art of self preservation and man's determination to fight his own battle. Everyone realizes if they are to be successful in life at all, they must rest on their own merits and not on the merits of others. No one takes any particular interest in a weakling or someone who has no self initiative.

Aside from the ill effects of intimidation there are those who subscribe to the theory that fear is the beginning of wisdom. This theory can only be true insofar as it stimulates precaution. For instance, what does it profit man to be wise if he is going to permit his wisdom to be blanketed with fear? The adoption of intimidation and fear into man's life means but the surrender of his ideals and principals to others. Man without the courage of his own convictions and a willingness to fight for those convictions, need not expect to get any further in life than his fellow man is willing to allow. Coupled with this fact which forces men permanently into the background, we have the approach of the two most deadly enemies known to mankind, namely, charity and sympathy. In support of this

statement I wish to make it clear that I do not refer to charity or sympathy in their natural form, or the good wrought by them within their own boundaries. Charity and sympathy differs but little from the food we eat or the liquid we drink. There is such a thing as getting an over-dose of either of them. The only way that charity and sympathy differs from food or liquid, is that one will make you sick physically, whereas the other will make you sick at heart. Science has proven over and over again that it is possible for man to suffer death without the effects of bodily imperfection. After all, the choice between being broken bodily and broken in spirit amounts to about the same thing. Where for instance, can there be found a man or woman (regardless their station in life) that can be placed at the mercy of charity and sympathy permanently without destroying their outlook on life? This in many cases brings about the complete destruction of their courage and self respect. Regardless of what extent one is willing to venture to disprove this statement, there are a million and one testimonials to substantiate it.

If the workings of intimidation, charity and sympathy are as destructive to the welfare of sighted people as man has found them to be, then how much more destructive are the effects of those enemies when associated with the welfare of the blind.

Here we find a situation that is similar in nature to that of the moth and the flames. Although, blindness is the only affliction that has a reconstruction value, the blind have sunk deeper beneath their affliction than any other class of handicapped people. Men

lose their legs, arms, hearing and become handicapped in various ways, but as long as they are gifted with normal health, they will utilize their handicap as an incentive to maintain a place in the sun. Whereas, ninety percent of the people who lose their sight surrender themselves to their handicap. There are, of course, many reasons given for this condition, but a lengthy and unbiased analysis of this situation by the writer plainly reveals that the fall of the blind and their unwillingness to over ride their handicap can be for the most part contributed to their ability to associate themselves with unrecognized enemies, namely intimidation, charity and sympathy. I have no desire to discredit any blind persons by comparing them with a moth, but for the most part blind people are as blind to the things that are harmful to them as are the moths that leap into the flames. If a moth leaps into the flames he does so because the flames are attractive to him, and without any knowledge of self destruction. This in reality is exactly what blind people are guilty of, especially those who permanently associate themselves with enemies that they never seem to discover as being their enemies. At least nine out of every ten blind people who are victims of such enemies will not listen to counsel against them, but rather assume the attitude that those who have the courage to loosen themselves from them are either ungrateful or foolishly independent.

Often people will ask blind people who are trained to travel alone, why they are able to navigate so well, and under the same breath condemn them for refus-

ing assistance, now just what they condemn them for is exactly why they are successful. Ambitious blind people can no more learn to travel alone and at the same time accept public assistance than they can learn to walk a tight rope. Experience teaches there is no mid-way alternative for blind people, they must either cultivate their instincts and rely upon them or else forfeit their usefulness and permit themselves to be led. Often pedestrians will interrupt blind people who are educated to travel alone (which of course is motivated by kindness), but in reality they actually blind him by destroying his sense of direction, his power of concentration and what's more, place him in a position as to completely lose contact with things at short range.

People in every walk of life who are ambitious at all will adopt some sort of a system most adaptable to their endeavor. If this system is practical and they can place their confidence in it, it naturally becomes their course of action. As long as this course of action runs true to form they will not only place their confidence in it, but protect it from infringement and interference either by persuasion or legal methods. Everyone enjoys self initiative and to be able to point to something of their own making, this privilege, however, is far removed from the ambitious blind through constant interference and a lack of understanding on the part of sighted people. If ambitious blind people wish to accomplish anything in their own right, they must first master their handicap which can only be accomplished through the force of an iron hand.

Most people take the attitude that blind people who

make an effort to defend themselves against too much harmful assistance are inconsiderate or ungrateful, this can only be true insofar as snap judgment is concerned. Every blind person that has any self initiative at all is appreciative of good will and the efforts of others in his behalf, but the trouble is they are in no position to show it without inviting their own downfall.

Everybody in every walk of life are forced from time to time to make important decisions in their own behalf, but no one is called upon to make a more difficult decision than those who are unfortunate enough to lose their sight. Persons placed in this position have but two avenues to choose from, success or failure. If they choose wisely they will rest on their own laurels and fight their way out regardless the amount of criticism directed against them; if they choose unwisely and associate themselves too closely with sympathy, charity, and the false conviction of others, they will leap with the moth into the flames.

In consideration of the fact that there are such few blind people that have the courage to overcome their handicap, it would be unfair to condemn public attitude towards the blind. The facts are that every blind person that has the strength to master his handicap and make his own way in life finds himself trailing at least nine other blind persons that have taken the direct opposite attitude toward their handicap and life in general. Therefore, we find every blind person who would be successful in life traveling a road with its bridges burnt ahead of him and without public opinion and support in back of him.

The question involving the attitude of the public towards blind people and the attitude of blind people toward sighted people is indeed a touchy subject. Sighted people (both of high and low degree) have but little if any confidence in the ability of blind people who are more or less generally accepted as beggars. So true is this that it is almost impossible to witness a movie or listen to a radio dramatization where a blind person is involved without that blind person playing the part of a beggar. On the other hand blind people seem to take the attitude that the whole world is against them and they mean no more in the general scheme of things than just a foot stool to the human family. Ordinarily in cases where there are conflicting opinions, only one opinion can be right, but in this case it is only fair to say both opinions are right. The sighted world takes the attitude they do towards blind people because blind people themselves have substantiated that attitude by their own acts. This attitude towards blind people is at least 2,000 years old and will continue to be so as long as the blind themselves are unwilling to take the initiative and fight their way out of a situation mostly of their own making. In passing I can do no better than to leave the blind with the thought that if they wish grapes they must learn to climb, if they want gold they must learn to dig, and if they want to regain recognition and the natural order of things they must learn to fight.

THE TALKING BOOK

THE TALKING BOOK

For centuries man has taught knowledge by spreading the written word through the medium of books, pamphlets, newspapers, and every form of publication to every city, town and hamlet the world over. The written word is and has always constituted man's greatest network of thought. It not only enables him to explore the minds of others, but broadens his vision as to his future and life in general. The written word not only provides the first avenue of education, but places at one's disposal a vast field of entertainment essential in the cultivation of a well developed and versified mind.

Here in America (the cradle of education) we find placed at man's disposal an educational system so vast and broad in its scope as to afford every man, woman and child with any education at all, an opportunity of developing an education free of cost. I refer of course to the vast chain of free libraries where American citizens in most every walk of life can go, secure and read a book of their own choice. No longer is it necessary for persons with a pair of good eyes to spend large sums in purchases of books in order to enjoy the writings of the great master minds of the past and the present. Whatever may be said about the vast educational program afforded the American people through the great network of free libraries would not fully justify

their place in American life, but this great educational system as broad as it is in its scope and as vast as it may seem, cannot penetrate fixed boundaries set by destiny. I have reference, of course, to the one hundred and twenty thousand blind persons living in America who are physically unable to profit from a great educational program that has meant so much to most every one, but the blind. As far back in the past as the written word has endured, we find blind people being forced to live in darkness with books and papers piled all about them. Only in rare cases and short periods have they been successful in having someone to read to them. In all the great and vast American systems of education and the many thousands of books that adorn the shelves of the many libraries has meant no more to one hundred and twenty thousand blind persons in America than the colleges and high schools meant to the average American citizen a century ago.

In the field of education as in every other field of great endeavor, we find at work the ever penetrating and irresistible hand of science, a hand that is never idle, constantly moving forward in its great task of removing barriers that hamper progress and the free circulation of the many great inventions enjoyed by mankind. Science has always found a way in meeting the demands of those that await her progress, and now in the last few years of the twentieth century after the relapse of more than nineteen hundred years we find her scoring another great victory in the field of education, only this time she comes to the rescue of the sightless.

Yes, at last, thanks to science, the Library of Congress and the American Foundation of the Blind, the sightless have a library of their own, which has been made possible through the invention of the talking book, whereby through the medium of sound reproduction records they are able to enjoy the written word almost in the same degree as do their fellow men in other walks of life.

Through an act of Congress, March 3, 1931, which authorized an appropriation of $100,000.00 for sound reproduction books, there has been established a library for such books in practically every state in the United States, whereby the adult and worthy blind are afforded the opportunity of selecting any book or set of books absolutely free of cost, even to the extent of free transportation through the United States mail. Since the first appropriation by Congress, March 3, 1931 of $100,000.00, Congress has substantially increased this appropriation annually, which at the close of the last fiscal year amounted to the sum of $1,104,000.00. $100,000.00 for books in raised type, $175,000.00 for sound reproduction talking book records and $829,000.00 for the construction of 20,150 talking book machines.

The talking book machines and the sound reproduction talking book records are the product of a Federal project known as the Emergency Relief Library of Congress Talking Book Project. This project is sponsored by the Library of Congress, while the Foundation for the Blind furnishes plans and supervision.

This Federal project known as the Emergency Re-

lief Library of Congress Talking Book Project is located at 675 Sixth Ave., New York, and practically all its employees other than a few highly trained engineers and artists essential to the project have been taken from the relief roll, including the blind and other handicapped persons. The latest available figures show that out of 742 employees employed in this worthy industry, 218 are handicapped persons made up as follows:—170 blind, 21 cardiac, and 27 mutes, these handicapped persons (particularly blind) found themselves facing a strange and difficult task. Some of them through the lack of opportunity to earn a dollar have been forced into idleness so long as to give up all hope of ever being self supporting again, but thanks to the Federal Government and the American Foundation for the Blind, they were taken in and educated to the work, which was done through the simple process of training each of them to one particular unit of the work until they were equal to the occasion. So we find one hundred and seventy blind persons (who were formerly victims of their handicap) now working at gainful employment, not only earning their own livelihood and regaining their independence but rendering a valuable service to thousands who walk the same path with them.

The sound reproduction talking book record is made up on twelve inch records with a reading time of any where from fifteen to twenty minutes, and it is possible for the adult blind to secure through the medium of these sound reproduction records any book or set of books available to people in other walks of life.

At the close of the last fiscal year 1939 there were

more than 37,000 volumes of reproduction talking books available to the adult and worthy blind. In order that these books could be conveniently placed at the disposal of its readers, 27 distributing libraries have been set up in various sections of the United States. These distributing libraries appear principally in the larger cities, where the blind population is the highest in number and are operated strictly under the supervision of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. and the American Foundation for the Blind.

The sound reproduction talking book has not only made it possible for the blind to read the works of the great master minds and to have a library of their own, but places at his disposal a variety of dramatic plays reenacted by some of the best screen and radio stars.

The talking book machine itself differs but little from the regular victrola or talking machine. It is made to operate both by electricity and spring power which places the machine at the disposal of the blind living in rural districts where there is no electricity, as well as those living in large cities. The talking book machine and the sound reproduction records are available only to the adult blind who are financially unable to secure them, and whose vision is impaired to the extent as to be unable to read the written word as it appears in books and other publications.

Blind people who are eligible to partake of this great scientific gift to the blind may obtain a book containing full information by writing to the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., or the American Foundation for the Blind in New York.

Information and statistics used in this article were taken from the talking book supplied and published by the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

ADMIRATION AND FRIENDSHIP
AS ACCEPTED BY
THE BLIND

ADMIRATION AND FRIENDSHIP AS ACCEPTED BY THE BLIND

The human eye, like a moving picture camera in motion, is never idle, never without something before it upon which to gaze. Acting as it does in the capacity of a window, or a servant of the human mind, it is always in search of something that is pleasing to the mind and fascinating to the imagination and subconscious mind. Everyone agrees if we are to truly enjoy things that appeal to our admiration, one must be able to see them. If one is strolling in a flower garden, or placed in a position to view the beautiful scenery that meets the vision of the eye, he must in order to require a reasonable conception of what he sees, be able to shape what he sees into a question of knowledge rather than being satisfied to accept it as it appears on the surface. The human eye at its best can do no better than portray what lies before it to the human mind, which in turn submits it to the subconscious mind where it becomes a question of knowledge. See what we will, let those things which we see be as fascinating and as beautiful as they may, no one ever fully enjoys or admires anything unless what they see (at least in some degree) becomes a question of knowledge, the more we know about the things we see and the people we meet, the more we are able to admire them. It is only through knowledge that we are able to break down false impressions of persons and places, and to learn to

know persons and places in their true form. While the human eye makes a large contribution to one's knowledge, it does not in any sense constitute a controlling factor. The power of concentration is, and has always been the gateway to knowledge, in this fact alone lies the one and only true answer as to whether or not blind people's conception of things around or about them are true or false.

In every case where a sighted person and a blind person are drawn together, and so situated as to view beautiful scenery, be it among flowers, along the river bank, from a mountain top, or any other place where eyesight is required to appreciate what lies before them, the sighted party sympathizes with his blind friend and takes the attitude that the show is all his own. I do not mean to imply that the blind person in this case sees the things that are before him in the same vain as does his sighted friend, nor do I mean to imply that the explanation of things made to blind persons by sighted persons are not essential and generally useful to them. However, what sighted people fail to realize in sympathizing with blind people is that there is more than one way of seeing a thing. Sighted people often spend hours searching a landscape for something to admire without ever penetrating the surface, and for the most part making little if any attempt to develop what they see into a question of knowledge. Whereas blind people placed in the same position are forced to create an imaginary picture of the things around and about them, which they submit to the mind, which in turn acts as a moving picture camera and creating a sixty percent correct picture of those

things around and about them. This sixty percent vision naturally refers to things as they appear on the surface to sighted people, and in no sense applies to things and situations solely removed from the vision of the eye, things and situations that appeal directly to the human mind for a solution.

Reviewing the situation from the standpoint of service rendered by the human eye, it is safe to estimate that the average person has never been able to see any more than one percent of the people, places and things in the world in which they live. This naturally places blind people on the same plane with sighted people, when it becomes a question of visualizing the remaining ninety-nine percent of persons, places and things not available to the vision of the human eye. Inasmuch as knowledge constitutes the only medium of contact to things not available to the vision of the human eye, it is also only fair to estimate that blind people are only blind to one percent of the people, places and things in the world in which we live, and even this one percent can be erased when associated with human beings. It is only a question of common knowledge to the people the world over, that the only true bond of friendship, loyalty, love and admiration found to exist between human beings is based on what we know of them, rather than what we see of them. While it is possible to learn to know, love and admire people from the standpoint of general appearance, it is never safe to place your confidence in them until your relationship with them becomes a question of knowledge.

Admiration, love, loyalty, honesty, friendship and everything else that goes into the making of a noble

man or woman are things that live in the human heart, and never come to the surface except through knowledge and power of concentration.

It is at this point that blind people take the inside track in their conception of human beings in general. If sighted people hope to obtain a true conception of those whom they come in contact with, they are forced to use the same medium of contact as used by blind people, inasmuch as the loss of sight quickens the growth and span of the human mind. Blind people are naturally placed in a better position to know, love and admire those whom they come in contact with than his sighted friends.

In all my twenty years of blindness I have never tackled a more hopeless problem than the problem of making sighted people understand that the loss of eyesight does not necessarily constitute blindness. The only people who are actually blind, are those who are unwise enough to accept the workings of a lesser member over a superior one, namely, the human mind. All that is necessary in order that blind people may enjoy life, admire people, places and things is to cultivate a mind in keeping with the growth of their other instincts. Inasmuch as blindness is the only affliction that has a reconstruction value, it is possible for blind people to surpass sighted people in terms of knowledge and admiration. However, it is only fair in conclusion to point out that the views expressed in this article can only be applied to blind people who have utilized the loss of sight to develop a strong, healthy and alert mind.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

From the sidewalk or up to any height one may climb, the man in public and private life alike never seem to rid themselves of the self appointed good Samaritan, who would appear so necessary in the lives of the oppressed.

Over the telephone and through the mail they spin their clever yarn of sympathy and charity. Although, one may discount his story or discredit his theory, he always manages to apply his trade and sell his ware. Accept or reject him, or place him in any category you like, he must be recognized as a highly trained business man, thoroughly schooled in the art of sounding out the weakness of his victim, and applying the pressure to the spot that he feels will be most profitable to his profession; seldom ever do his victims realize the folly of his deed, or the depth of his weakness to match wits with this clever intruder until he is minus of the sum for which he came. It is not the hope of this article to discredit true charity, or to chill the warmth of the many hearts from which it flows, or does it hope to overshadow worthy organizations with the misdeeds of false ones. Nevertheless, one may be reasonably sure that an accurate survey would reveal that more than a million dollars annually is snatched from the public purse in Baltimore City alone by cleverly devised schemes highly designed to play upon the sympathetic chord of the public. To say that this is just foolhardy

on the part of the public would be inadequate. If the blame for this costly waste and its effects upon society can be accredited to anything, it can be accredited to man's indifference and his inability to bring the past up to the future. It will be quite useless on the part of anyone to fix in the public eye the many and unusual activities of the racketeer, or to guess accurately his approach, but one may be reasonably sure that he will come in the name of charity, usually representing some unfortunate group, or so called charitable organization.

One only has to visualize what is taking place in the lives of the blind and the much over-rated gospel that is being preached in his behalf. Having been chosen by destiny to endure what might be accepted as a capital affliction, he forms a perfect background for the racketeer. Although, he receives little, if anything, from the large sums collected in his name, he somehow seems to get credit for it all. By far the average citizen has been educated to believe that there are institutions in Baltimore City that offer the blind a variety of trades, trades that will pay him anywhere from ten to twenty dollars per week. They are also under the impression there are comfortably provided homes for the blind, and he may at will receive hospital care, fuel, clothing and most every comfort of life is given to him free of charge. Now the facts are, most every trade he had the opportunity to embrace in the past, has been wiped out by the swift change of the natural order of things, worse than this nothing is being done to create new endeavors to take their place. As for his salary, the best he can expect to earn is from two to seven dollars per week, and when his carfare, lunch and the cost of

the material used by him (which is being charged to him) is deducted, he scarcely has anything left other than an empty pay envelope. Empty, indeed, by the time so much is taken out weekly for the fuel, which they would like for the public to believe he is receiving free of cost. Really there is not much left and the only place that blind persons in poor circumstances may go to receive hospital, or medical care is in the free dispensaries, (all become a public charge). If he is homeless, hungry, or in need of clothing, he may best find it among friends, relatives, or by knocking on the poor house door. Therefore, the best the blind can hope for while at the mercy of the would-be-good Samaritan, is to be used as a tool in which to chisel funds from the public purse.

Following close on the heels of the higher ups comes the more sinister racketeer, who usually operates in the name of some small blind group, or letter head organization. With this accomplishment well in hand, he buys a paint brush and proceeds to paint a picture in the minds of his victims that could not be equaled by Michelangelo himself. His tools are varied, having a different one for every approach. The most favorite tool he uses with more skill than all the rest is the one he uses to blind his patient as to his true mission. Exercising the utmost care that the picture he paints is so in nature as to be short-lived, disappearing as he himself disappears, making sure at all times to leave his victim in such a state of mind as not to check on his activities. Last, but not least, comes the individual blind operator known as the hundred per-

center. Operating as he always does under cover without an address, phone number, or any other form of identification, using his affliction as a shield, he simply spins his little yarn over the phone and when he has been successful enough to locate a victim, he begins to proceed with lightning-like rapidity to collect his loot, which is usually done before his victim can count his change, or check his mistake.

Momentarily one might be inclined to sympathize with the victim of the racketeer, but in all fairness to his charitable instinct, I think this is just a little more than he has a right to expect. He knows, or at least he should know there are paid organizations in Baltimore City, whose business is to protect him from the racketeer. These organizations do not only exist, but function with considerable skill. They not only know the racketeer, but check his every move and can on request supply valuable information to those that seek it. Information that would not only save the citizen's money, but place him in a position to make a worth while contribution to the community, and at the same time protect worthy causes from reaping the ill effects of false ones.

THE BLIND BROTHERHOOD OF MARYLAND, INC.

THE BLIND BROTHERHOOD OF MARYLAND, INC.

This organization was organized October 27, 1927 and was incorporated August 30, 1928, and was brought into existence by a growing need for an organization that could justly represent the blind of the state of Maryland. This organization has been built upon a fraternal foundation, it has been so designed in its scope as to extend its activities to every branch of action that may best serve the needs of the blind.

Unlike many other fraternal organizations it is non-sectarian and accepts only blind, or partly blind persons into its fold. This organization's cardinal purpose is to safe-guard and to promote the moral, social, and civil welfare of the blind in general. Naturally like all other fraternal organizations its first responsibility is pledged to those who embrace her ranks and abide by its ideals and constitution.

In order that the activities of this organization may function with the greatest degree of accuracy possible, its work has been divided into six separate and distinct fields of operation, namely, legislative, commercial, educational, social and philanthropic.

Through the constant research efforts this organization has been able to organize and maintain a legislative program, that is both local and national in

scope. After a five year uphill fight the organization was able to pass the White Cane Act, which was signed by Governor Herbert O'Conor on May 3, 1939. The signing of this bill by his excellency the Governor, entitled Maryland to be the sixth State in the Union to adopt such a law.

After a ten year unsuccessful effort to bring about a state-wide pension for the blind in the State of Maryland, the Brotherhood is now supporting the McNary Bill. This bill is national in scope, and if passed, will grant every eligible blind person in America a pension of six hundred dollars annually and with the right to earn equally as much.

Among one of the more difficult legislative problems facing the organization is the task of modifying the Workmen's Compensation Act, which indirectly forbids blind persons from working in industries, or at any position that requires him to come under the act. The Brotherhood has at least a twenty year program ahead of it in the legislative field alone, and if this organization had no other reason for staying in existence than this alone, her efforts would be fully justified.

Aside from this organization's responsibilities in the legislative field, it has stretched out before it the vast unexplored Commercial field. Although, this field has countless opportunities to offer most every one, the blind for some hidden reason never seem to share them. When this problem is narrowed down and the final analyses are revealed, it is quite evident that the only chance the blind have to share the harvest pro-

duced in this vast field is to earn his livelihood through operating some small business, such as news and tobacco stands, or the opening up of a small confectionery business. There are hundreds of blind persons living in Baltimore city alone that have always cherished this hope, a hope that sooner, or later vanishes into a financial dream. Although, it would require only a small investment to resurrect these hopes, nothing ever seems to be done about it, except to a favorite few, who have gained advantages through the process of law. Contrary to public belief, the organization in question does not receive any appropriations from the city, or state Government, but rather are forced to operate solely on funds created through social functions. Strangely enough these activities have been hampered through the lack of interest and undue criticism on the part of men in high places, who never seem to care, or take the pains to acquaint themselves with the true existing facts. The question of financing small businesses, or creating jobs for blind persons is a part of the Brotherhood constitution. It could with the proper funds give rise to the hopes of many, but as long as there are no available funds for this worthy cause, the Brotherhood's efforts in this direction will just have to remain a dim light burning in the far distant future.

The educational program adopted by the Brotherhood confines itself chiefly to books and literature. This is done principally through a program of constant communication with all the worth while blind organizations and educational foundations throughout the nation. The organization will on request assist her

membership to secure anything it may desire in the field of education. One of the Organization's chief problems along the line of education is to acquaint the public as to the qualifications of blind persons, his ability to accomplish and his right to earn a livelihood free from charity and political barriers.

Naturally the Brotherhood does not differ from other fraternal organizations, it confines her social, moral and charitable activities to her fraternal rituals that are never exposed to anyone other than a member in good standing.

The one course of action that definitely separates the Brotherhood from other similar, or fraternal organizations is that it collects no dues, nor does it tax her membership in any way, shape, or form. Everything within the gift of the organization is free to her members. Aside from keeping her membership free from taxation, it provides and maintains an annual membership dividend fund, members receive from twenty to fifty percent of her annual net income. These dividends are paid to the members on the third Thursday in December of each year.

It is also noteworthy that this organization has no paid officers other than the Secretary, who receive a small salary and who must always be a sighted person.

The by-laws and constitution of the Brotherhood provides that none, but a blind, or partly blind person, male of the white race may be eligible for membership. Persons seeking membership in the Brotherhood must be twenty-one years of age and having lived in the State of Maryland for the period of at least one

year. All persons found to possess police records, or indicted with the habit of drink, or any other habit that might discredit him in the eyes of the public is not permitted in the Brotherhood. Although, the organization does not prohibit persons on the grounds of poverty, it does demand that poverty be clothed with cleanliness and decency.

There are to be found in all organizations a definite set of rules and regulations which for the most part is subjected to favoritism and in some cases remain only on paper. This is where the Brotherhood differs from the average organization, it not only has her rules and regulations, but it lives by them. Members coming into the organization are educated as to her laws and a definite line is drawn without respect to persons, or places. After due notice has been served and a chance for restitution has been made, the organization does not hesitate to apply penalties. In all cases where penalties fail to bring cooperation from the violators, the organization does not hesitate to remove them from her ranks. The strict enforcement of the rules and regulations on the part of the organization is chiefly maintained to create a decent atmosphere for those, who may be eligible to embrace her fold and abide by her principles.